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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY JULY 23, 2004

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for July 23, 2004. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. Cumhuriyet: 400,000 square meters of the 767,734 square meter Iskenderun airport has been turned over to Mustafa Kemal University in Hatay. (Note: the airport was built for military purposes 60 years ago and was briefly used for civil transportation, as well. End note). The Iskenderun Sub-governor, Unal Erdogan, said the Engineering, Architecture and Aqua Products Faculties would be opened on the campus' newly acquired property.

3. Hurriyet: PKK member Murat Karayilan wrote a letter to the anti-Ocalan "Nasname" internet site, claiming the recent bomb attack against Van Governor Hikmet Tan was undertaken by a Hizbullah faction that had joined the PKK. The letter claimed that a former politician had given 4 trillion Turkish Liras (approximately \$3.5 million) to PKK-Kongra Gel to fund the attack. In reference to the issue, Governor Tan said he doubted the information, but that the GOT would look into it.

4. Evrensel: The Mardin Governor, Temel Kocaklar, announced that GOT forces detonated a land mine on an unspecified road used by hundreds of vehicles daily. He claimed that the mine was planted by PKK-Kongra Gel militants.

5. Evrensel: GOT forces launched an infantry operation in the rural Dicle, Diyarbakir province, against PKK-Kongra Gel members.

6. Evrensel: The Fifth Munzur Cultural and Nature Festival of Tunceli will be held on July 31, 2004. The festival will last for four days. The motto of the festival will be "The Munzur Will Not Flow Into Dams, But to Peace." The festival will feature plays, exhibitions, folk dances, concerts and film shows. In addition, questions such as dam construction in the Munzur Valley, Kurdish issues, and the Greater Middle East Initiative will be discussed during the event.

7. Evrensel: The Batman Mayor, Huseyin Kalkan, announced that the second Batman-Hasankeyf Cultural and Art Festival would be held between September 26 and October 2, 2004. Kalkan said the Cuban President Fidel Castro and the Former South African President, Nelson Mandela, have been invited to the festival. The Eurovision Contest Winner, Ruslana, will give a concert for the opening of the festival.

8. Turkiye: A Turkish national who crossed the Turkish-Iranian border illegally, for smuggling purposes, in Gelenler village of Baskale, Van province, was killed by Iranian soldiers.

9. Turkiye: Explosives were thrown at a bar in Mazgirt township of Tunceli last night. No casualties have been reported. During the investigation at the scene, the police found a piece of cloth on which TIKKO (The Turkish Workers Villagers Communist Army) was written.

10. Radikal: 2000 villagers from Ordekli village in Hakkari province had been compelled to evacuate their village ten years ago due to violence in the region. Recently, the Hakkari Governorate permitted some of the villagers to return to Ordekli, 40 kilometers away from Hakkari. The villagers found their houses in a devastated state, and 30 families who returned have been living in tents without any potable water, electricity, or schools. The state provided only \$200 worth construction material to each family for building their houses. The villagers are trying to survive with the money they make from cutting grass for livestock.

11. Ulkede Gundem: Village guards in Diyarbakir province claim that the Dover Jandarma Station Commander in Dicle, Diyarbakir, has been arbitrarily deducting approximately \$7 from the salaries of 223 village guards. One of the guards, Abdulaziz Bildirici, filed charges with the Dicle Public Prosecutor against the Jandarma Commander after refusing to pay the deduction and subsequently being "insulted."

12. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: GOT forces arrested seven persons in Cizre, Sirnak province, on July 18. Three of the arrestees are being accused of alleged membership in the Peoples' Defense Forces (HPG), while the others are being accused of assisting

and harboring members of the illegal organization.

13. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: The Elazig Criminal Court of Peace fined four DEHAP Elazig Provincial Administrators approximately \$1,400 for possessing illegal publications in the office. The Elazig police had raided DEHAP office on February 26, 2003, seizing 21 books and magazines as illegal publications.

14. Ulkede Ozgur Gundem: The Bingol Public Prosecutor filed charges against the Bingol Human Rights Association Chapter President, Ridvan Kizgin, for a statement he made during the HRA's convention on October 25, 2003 (at that meeting, he said: "Bingol is kept under unique status. Special administrators and security officers are assigned to Bingol.") The HRA Provincial Secretary, Habibe Feray Salman, is also accused of insulting government officials. The first hearing for both is scheduled for September 9, 2004.